Slow pace in Agricultural Sector

1561. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

whether the foodgrains output in the country is growing at less than 3 per cent every year;

if so, the reasons for this slow pace of output in agricultural sector;

whether it is a fact the production of foodgrains and pulses have been stagnated for a number of years;

if so, the details thereof;

the reasons therefor; and

the steps taken by the Central Government to make farming attractive?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) The growth in the foodgrains output has been fluctuating over the year. The foodgrains output in the country grew at 5.2 per cent during 2005-06, at 4.2 per cent during 2006-07 and is estimated to grow at 0.9 per cent during 2007-08.

The annual foodgrains output depends upon a combination of factors like temporal and spatial distribution of monsoon rainfall, timely availability and use of quality seeds and fertilizers, incidence of pests and diseases and irrigation facility; among others.

(c) to (e) During the last ten years, the foodgrains production has increased from 203.61 million tonnes during 1998-99 to 219.32 million tonnes during 2007-08 (2nd advance estimates released on 7th February 2008). However, the production of pulses was 14.91 million tonnes during 1998-99 and is estimated to be 14.34 million tonnes during 2007-08.

The reasons for stagnation in the production of pulses are: Pulses are genetically low yielding and less input responsive as compared to cereals, the cultivation of pulses is done on marginal and sub-marginal land under rainfed conditions by small and marginal farmers whose capacity for input use is very low, there is no varietal break-through and pulses are more prone to pests and diseases.

(0 Government has approved the National Policy for Fanners 2007, which *inter-alia* aims to improve the economic viability of farming by substantially increasing the net income

of farmers through asset reforms in respect of land, water, livestock, fisheries and bio-resources; support services and inputs like application of frontier technologies for improving productivity, supply of good quality seeds and disease free planting material, issue of soil health pass book and integrated nutrient and pest management system, among others. Further, Government has launched two new schemes (i) National Food Security Mission for increasing production and productivity of rice, wheat and pulses; and (ii) Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana to incentivise the States to increase public investment in Agriculture and Allied Sector. Besides, a Number of initiatives, Plan Schemes and programme including those announced in the Budget 2008-09 have been initiated to address the problems faced by the farmers and for development of agriculture sector.

Estimated rate of yield of agricultural produces

†1562. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA: DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

whether the efforts of increasing the rate of yield of agriculture are being made in the country during the last few years;

if so, the details thereof; and

the estimated rate of yield of agriculture production in the country in the year 2003-2004 and 2007-2008?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Department of Agriculture & Cooperation is implementing a number of Plan Schemes for increasing the production, productivity, and rate of yield of agriculture. The measures taken under the said schemes include soil testing, availability of quality/high-yielding seeds, balanced and judicious use of chemical fertilizers in conjunction with organic sources of nutrients, pest management availability of water, etc. Ministry of Agriculture has recently launched two new schemes *i.e.* National Food Security Mission to improve production and productivity of rice, wheat and pulses and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana to incentivise the states to increase public investment in agriculture and allied sectors and to maximize returns to the farmers in agriculture and allied sector.

(c) The details indicating All India Estimate of Area, Production and Yield of Foodgrains and Oilseeds for last five years are given in Statement—I and II.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.